MORE LIKE MOSES?

By Robert A. Bernstein
Special to Ground Zero News

Conventional wisdom notwithstanding, learning that a child is gay has launched legions of parents on an enriching journey of personal growth. So to us, it is not merely ironic, but an affront to our spiritual and family values, that a mainstream denomination plans to try one of its bishops for heresy for ordaining an openly gay deacon.

Among our parental legions, moreover, is another bishop who prevailed against a similar accusation more than a decade ago.

A court of nine Episcopal bishops is scheduled to hear charges against a retired colleague, Walter Righter, stemming from the 1990 Newark Diocese ordination of Barry L. Stopfel. Bishop Righter will thereby take his place in ecclesiastical history alongside United Methodist Bishop Melvin Wheatley, Jr.

Bishop Wheatley was tried for heresy in 1982 for appointing an openly gay minister as pastor of a Denver church. Twelve years earlier, Mel and Lucile Wheatley had learned that one of their four children, John, was gay. "We knew immediately that if John was gay, the stereotypes must be false," Bishop Wheatley says. "We also knew we wouldn't be comfortable anywhere John wasn't welcome."

So Wheatley thereupon became one of the nation's first high churchmen to actively espouse gay equality within organized religion. He was on course toward his ultimate "heresy."

John died of melanoma cancer in 1984. But Melvin and Lucile Wheatley, living in retirement in Southern California, say the now find as much spiritual renewal from their work with PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) as they do in church.

For the Wheatleys and so many others, our openly gay children have shown us the healing power of truth-telling and respect for human differences. To us, they reflect the creative human potential inherent in anyone, gay or straight, being able to say, "I am what I am, and that's OK."

It's the point of an old Hasidic story about a Rabbi Zusya, who applied to heaven expecting to be asked, "Why weren't you more like Moses?" Instead, he was asked, "Why weren't you more like Rabbi Zusya?"

Thus, the gay movement exists because millions of individuals have decided—in defiance of a massive social tide of misinformation and hostility—that accepting their God-given natures is part of their quest for authenticity and wholeness.

The Rev. Jane Spahr, a lesbian Presbyterian minister, sums it up: "God yearns for us to be ourselves. Being true to my orientation is the most spiritual thing that ever happened to me."

Not surprisingly, in the first shock of learning they have a gay child, parents are rarely overcome by visions of spiritual insight to come. More typically, our natural parental love founders initially on the shoals of entrenched social norms. The horror stories of conventional wisdom, and the fears of "what others might think," threaten to overwhelm our familial instincts and our need to understand.

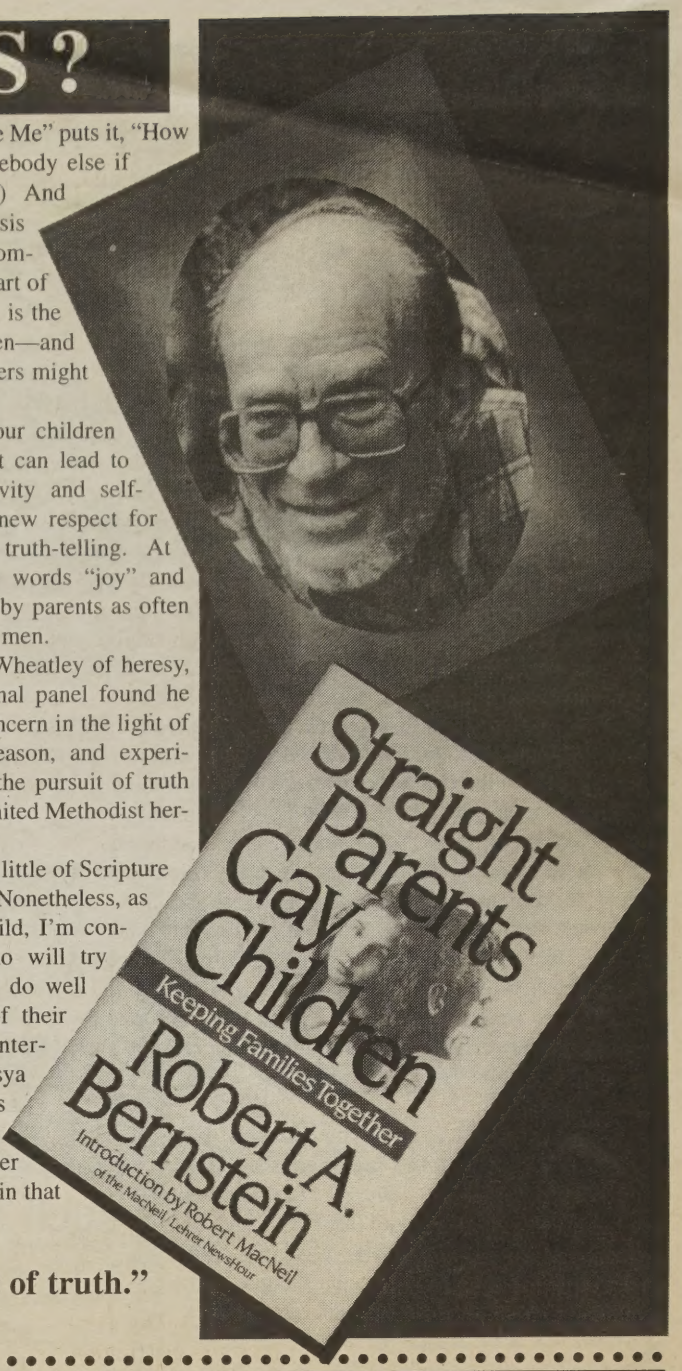
Ultimately, though, this tension forces us to look more closely at who we are—what values are truly important to us. Our kids in effect become our role models. We learn to look beyond social norms and strive, like them, to simply be whoever we are. (As the old song "I've Gotta Be Me" puts it, "How can I be right for somebody else if I'm not right for me.") And resolving that inner crisis blends into our own coming-out process. For part of who we are, of course, is the parents of gay children—and so much for "what others might think."

It's a process, as our children learned before us, that can lead to new levels of sensitivity and self-awareness. We gain new respect for personal integrity and truth-telling. At PFLAG meetings, the words "joy" and "liberation" are spoke by parents as often as by lesbians and gay men.

In clearing Bishop Wheatley of heresy, the 1982 denominational panel found he had "addressed this concern in the light of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience in keeping with the pursuit of truth characteristic of our United Methodist heritage."

I confess to knowing little of Scripture or religious tradition. Nonetheless, as the father of a gay child, I'm convinced that those who will try Bishop Righter would do well to study the words of their 1982 Methodist counterparts. Like Rabbi Zusya and millions of parents of gay kids, they might benefit from a closer look at the key phrase in that panel's conclusion:

"The pursuit of truth."



WHERE HAVE ALL THE HOMOPHOBES GONE?: STATE POLITICS IN THE GINGRICH ERA

by John D'Emilio

The Republican Party's Contract with America --and it's younger sibling, the Contract with the American Family--have dominated political reporting for most of the year. Because both have chosen to sidestep head-on discussion of homosexuality, gay issues have slipped from the national media's radar screen. For many gay men, lesbians and bisexuals this must come as a welcome relief, a moment of respite in a hard political season. Who, after all, could enjoy being the target of the kind of rhetoric generated in the last few years--at the Republican convention in Houston, in the Senate hearings on the military's exclusion policies, or in the fight over the NEA?

The lull, however, is more apparent than real. Congress is not the only body that legislates. In the fifty states, there was no Contract with America to discipline local right -wing political leaders, but in many of them there is an infrastructure of gay organizations eager to move forward their quest for respect and equality. The result is that state capitals rather than Congress have become the battleground upon which the issue of equal rights for gays is being fought.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute recently released a study of state legislation. Because the survey is the first of its kind, it is impossible to determine whether the action level is greater or less than in recent years, but what can be said with certainty is that legislative debates about the place of gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens in society are extensive. At least 97 gay-related measures moved forward in 33 states, anti-gay measures received serious consideration, while 18 states advanced non-discrimination bills of one sort or another.

The news, both good and bad, can tell us much about the political strength of the gay community and of its most outspoken opponents.

The brightest spot was Rhode Island, which became the ninth state to enact a statewide civil rights measure banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. The clearest pattern of gay-friendly activity was the tendency, expressed in fifteen states, to include sexual orientation among a list of categories needing protection against discrimination. They tended to cluster around two broad areas of policy-making legislation: health care and hate crimes. In Massachusetts, for instance, several bills which prohibit discrimination in the delivery of various kinds of health services made it through committee.

For close observers of gay politics, these results should provide some measure of comfort. The AIDS crisis has propelled activists out pf their community and into the center of the health-care field. Their work, and that of the women's and lesbian health care movements, is reaping dividends. In the same way, activists since the early 1980's have fought vigorously to call attention to anti-gay hate violence. At the state and national level, they have worked closely in coalitions with other targeted groups to have hate crimes recognized as a form of violence needing special remedies.

Meanwhile, the national climate of divisiveness and intolerance is playing itself out in state politics. Even in states like New York, California, and Massachusetts, where the gay community is well organized and has long been visible, anti-gay measures were able to receive a hearing. In other states, right-wing Republicans had an easier time transforming their agenda into policy. In Arizona , where the Radical Right has a working majority of the state Republican party's governing body, the governor signed into law a measure prohibiting school districts from implementing any course of study that "promotes" a homosexual lifestyle or portrays homosexuality as a "positive alternative life-style." And Utah became the first state to impose an explicit ban on recognizing same-gender marriages that may be performed in other states.

As these last examples suggest, the right wing is choosing its targets shrewdly. From a proposal in Oregon that would effectively prohibit doctors from performing alternative insemination on unmarried women--including lesbians--to a bill in Vermont that would ban adoption by unmarried couples and second-parent adoption, the Far Right is attempting to construct a barbed-wire fence of law and public policy. Its purpose: to keep lesbians , gay men and bisexuals out of the territory marked "children and family."

The strategy speaks both to the history of gay oppression and to the contemporary state of lesbian and gay concerns. In the past, medical, legal and religious discourse defined homosexuals in opposition to the heterosexual nuclear family. Inflammatory stereotypes defined queers, whether male or female, as predators seeking to invade the sanctum of the home and to steal the young.

For previous generations, the price of adopting a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity has often been to live outside the family. When a gay political agenda took shape after Stonewall, basic goals such as sodomy law repeal, civil rights protections, and the removal of the stigma of mental illness took precedence. But now, the gay community across the country is reclaiming family. Lesbians are choosing to have children, gay men are seeking to become foster parents, both men and women are insisting that their intimate partnerships be recognized by law. Lesbian, gay and bisexual parents want their children--and their children's peers--to be taught tolerance in school, while the parents and advocates of gay youth are insisting that the schools respond to the needs of their sexual minority students. In almost every area of public policy that impinges on family and youth, gay voices are being heard.

These voices are new, and not yet well organized. And so the Radical Right has rushed into the void, playing upon the emotional flashpoints that run through American culture, and fomenting fear. It is not hard to do. With the crisis of family and community that Americans are living through, gay men, lesbians and bisexuals are easier, simpler targets than a changing labor market with wage structures that compromise family stability, or school systems without the resources to educate.

This year's legislative record suggests that the gay community needs to apply to the arena of family the lessons it has learned in it's fight for health care and against hate-motivated violence--patient, deliberate, and sustained organization; broad-based education of sympathetic allies; and the careful articulation of an agenda rooted in the real needs of its members.

Author and historian John D'Emilio is director of the Policy Institute at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington D.C. Reprinted with Permission from Resist Oct. 95 Newsletter

QUACK QUACK! "such is LIFE!" Cartoon Strip Debuts

Duckfeathers and confetti fill the skies in celebration of a new monthly series of cartoons debuting this month in the ***Ground Zero News***. As a social commentary, **"such is LIFE!"** exposes the vulnerabilities of GAY LIFE and life itself.

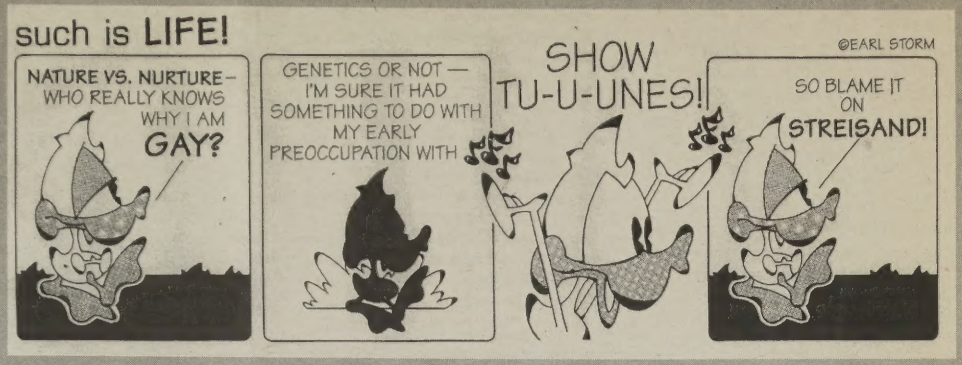
"such is LIFE!" chronicles the adventures, observations and commentaries of "buckminster duck," a somewhat inquisitive, somewhat introspective, somewhat irreverent and yet insecure little duck on the path of self-discovery.

The charm of the strip is that it combines gay camp with politics, philosophy, spirituality, love and romance, societal attitudes and Hollywood gossip with whimsical and often poignant satire. "buckminster duck" transcends stereotypical characterizations and approaches being Gay from a more social/spiritual perspective. As you get to know the strip, you'll notice that "Duck" and "Gay" are virtually synonymous. All the characters who are ducks are Gay. If you are not a duck....Pity!

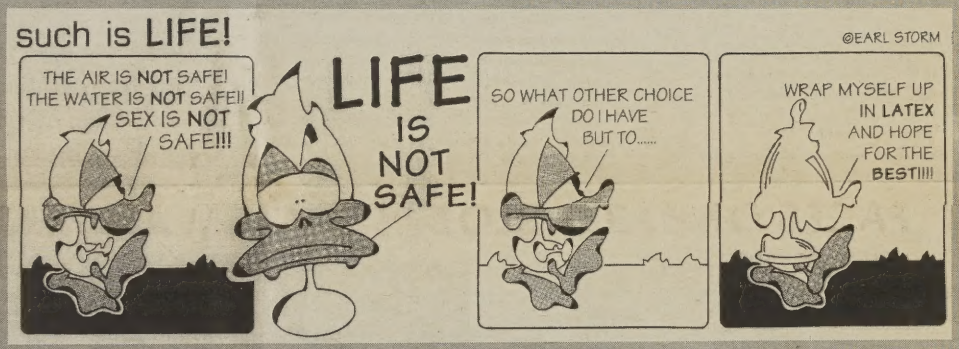
In his cosmic quest, "buckminster duck" can be found in a wide variety of localities (tossing and turning in bed, on a mountain, at the movies, at a coffeehouse, in therapy, etc.) and occasionally in the company of an assortment of characters (ducks or otherwise) including: Weez, his straight soul mate; Phenix, a dyke duck,; Dylan, his duck buddy; Dr. Quackenbill, his therapist and The Cosmic Diva, his spiritual guru.

"such is LIFE!," created by cartoonist Earl Storm of San Diego has been published in the *Gay and Lesbian Times"* (a Southern California weekly) since July 1994 and has gathered quite a following. With circulation throughout San Diego, Orange County, Palm Springs and Los Angeles, "buckminster duck" works his way across the nation, he is very pleased to occasionally ruffle the feathers of those radical wackos in Colorado Springs.QUACK QUACK!

You can easily find the further adventures of "buckminster duck" on the Internet through Southern California Wired: http://.gaywired.com/~unity/quack/suchlife.htm. Feel free to leave E-mail. It's one of the things the duck lives for.


such is LIFE!
©EARL STORM
NATURE VS. NURTURE— WHO REALLY KNOWS WHY I AM GAY?
GENETICS OR NOT — I'M SURE IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY EARLY PREOCCUPATION WITH
SHOW TU-U-UNES!
SO BLAME IT ON STREISAND!

such is LIFE!
©EARL STORM
BUCKMINSTER!.....FIRST IT WAS EVERY SHADE OF PURPLE!!! THEN CAME THE PINK TRIANGLES!!!
AND NOW YOU TELL ME YOU OWN THE RAINBOW!
SEE!.....YOU ARE TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD!!!
NO!... JUST THE COLOR CHARTS!!!


such is LIFE!
©EARL STORM
THE AIR IS NOT SAFE! THE WATER IS NOT SAFE!! SEX IS NOT SAFE!!!
LIFE IS NOT SAFE!
SO WHAT OTHER CHOICE DO I HAVE BUT TO.....
WRAP MYSELF UP IN LATEX AND HOPE FOR THE BEST!!!!

Steven's Story--Our Story

by Julie Cooper

Usually in this space we print the Historically Gay column. This month, Ground Zero received a story through E-mail that desperately needed to be told, for the sake of everyone who can relate to it, and for the sake of our gay children today who continue to struggle with their identity under the the magnifying glass of political and social scrutiny.

This is Steven's story. This is our story.

The other kids teased nine-year-old Steven mercilessly for playing with Barbie dolls and girls. He was beat up regularly by the boys in class and in his neighborhood. When his peers and the older boys called him "faggot" and "queer," Steven would curse them, try to call them names back, and run home to cry.

His parents and other adults told themselves that this was just a phase Steven was going through that he would eventually grow out of. The children were left to resolve their "personal conflicts" on their own backed by the belief that children can be cruel to each other, that it's all part of their play and social development, but eventually work things out.

But not this time, not with a child like Steven. At the age of nine, his orientation was already an integral part of his life, in the way he played and how he related to himself and to the other children.

While the other children were constantly affirmed of their heterosexuality, in the home with mom and dad, in the schools with straight (or straight-acting) teachers and counselors, in the movies with love affairs between Meg Ryan and Kevin Costner, on TV sit-coms, and in the magazine ads that espoused and glorified the man-woman relationship, Steven had no adult role-model with which he could identify. He was alone, without the understanding and support of anyone, not even his parents.

The cruelty from the other children ticked inside Steven like a time-bomb.

The bruises on Steven's body healed, but the bruises on his spirit festered. The torment he felt inside turned into the only emotion it could in a reactive and still immature nine-year-old. It turned into rage.

Last month Steven's mother, Karen Wilson, finally stepped in when she found her son choking a seven-year-old neighbor boy.

"Steven had the little boy on the ground where he couldn't breathe. I didn't want him to hurt him or anything," Wilson said.

A week later, Steven was found dead in a drainage ditch a mile form his home. Steven's small body had been raped, beaten with a log and drowned.

Lamount Harden, the 15-year-old brother of the boy Steven had choked, was charge with the crime after a pair of Harden's muddy jeans were found in the trash outside the apartment where Steven lived, according to Associated Press sources. Police officials have refused to give a motive.

But we know the motive. Harden had probably been one of the neighborhood boys that teased Steven and passed his bigotry onto his younger brother, who in turn called Steven the names he had heard his big brother say so many times before. No doubt Harden killed Steven, not because he had choked his younger brother, but because he was gay.

This unnecessary and violent death of a young boy could easily have been avoided had there been adult intervention in Steven's life and had there been a school policy that enforced anti-bigotry among the students.

The Alameda, California Board of Education recently passed a resolution that encourages local school boards to ensure the safety of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, implements staff development programs that address the needs of these students and staff members and implements curricula that addresses the issues of this at-risk population.

Within the past year, a similar resolution was in the process of being presented to the Colorado Board of Education by the Colorado PTA. But through a relentless campaign from the radical right aimed at the PTA, the resolution was quickly abandoned. The Right considered it a victory. Campaigns by the radical right across the country target local school boards to deny protection to their gay, lesbian and bisexual students. These same campaigns seek to eradicate all mention of homosexuality within the classroom, within the libraries and within the supposed privacy of the school-counselor's chambers. As a result of the radical rights efforts, gay, lesbian and bisexual students in almost every school in this nation face the same violence and isolation as Steven on a daily basis.

Had a resolution similar to Alameda's been passed by Steven's school board, Steven would be alive today.

The killing of Steven has changed the community of Middletown, Delaware, forever, according to long-time resident Bonnie Campbell. Middletown's population is about 5,000 surrounded for 20 miles by a farm community.

"This is the shame of our society," Campbell said. "The children don't have the time to enjoy their childhood, a protected childhood. They're handed the horrors of society on a dirty platter."

Prosecutors will seek life in prison for Lamount Harden, who, sadly, is also a victim of society's enforced bigotry and ignorance. He lived with his mother and two younger brothers across from the Wilson's. Harden is being held on more than $1 million bail.

Steven was last seen alive October 14, playing in the courtyard of the apartment complex he called home.

A Book Review by Julie Cooper

Christian Identity is the radical right of the radical right. It is quickly emerging in this country as an influential religiously based para-military organization with a spirituality based in extreme fundamentalist Christian theology.

The draw of this cult is white supremacy. The result is hate, violence and genocide of every non-Anglo-Saxon -Christian in the United States such as African-Americans, Native-American, Jews, pagans, hispanics etc..

The structure of hate groups such as the Aryan Nation and the neo-Nazis strongly base their belief system in this theogy.

What is the basis of the Christian Identity. why are seemingly nice, caring people drawn to it?

According to Leonard Zeskind, author of *The Christian Identity Movement,* Identity is similar to other Bible-based religious cults. As a result, organizers can use this distinct beliefs as recruiting tools among people whose initial interest in Christian Identity is religious. It can the funnel new recruits into a racist and anti-semitic movement through ostensibly non-political means."

Christian Identity believes that the people of Northern Europe -White Anglo-Saxons -are the the Lost Tribes of Israel. Jews are considered "Children of Satan," and Black people, as well as people of color, are considered "pre-Adamic" and therefore a lower species than that of white people. The migration of the White-Anglo-Saxons to the shores of the New World is believed by Christian Identity followers to be a sort of Exodus of these white children of God to their promised land.

The structure of this belief becomes two-fold: it provides religious unity to racist political groups, and it brings religious people into contact with the racist movement.

The Christian Identity movement uses its twisted and self-identified interpretation of the Bible to draw racist and religious people alike in their fold.

The theological construction and its racist structure present a danger to Christians of good will whose belief in a theology of love is under attack, as well as an immediate physical danger to people of color and non-Christians, specifically Blacks and Jews.

Christian Identity (C.I.) justifies its White Supremacist beliefs by identifying the Bible as a race-based account of a people of God. The Jews, according to C.I., struggled to maintain their racial purity, rather than their spiritual identity. With this as a basis, the C.I. then contends that the Lost Tribes of Israel are racial rather than spiritual and that the appearance of these tribes today can represent an un-interrupted link with biblical people and therefore with the biblical prophesies.

With the belief that white-Anglo-Saxons are Lost Tribes of Israel, these prophesies can then be interpreted through a white supremacist mentality. The legacy of these biblical prophecies then does not depend on a spiritual relationship with God and nations or the individual, but rather on race, confirming the "birthright" of the white people.

The efforts of C.I. organizations, then, seeks to reclaim this birthright, as confirmed by them in their interpretation of the Bible, through political and violent means. Wars for racial purity, according to C.I. are condoned and encouraged in the Bible, and therefore justifies the C.I. present-day battle for supremacy through personal and organized violence, political strategies and para-military activity.

Though the C.I. is still a movement, restricted to racist organizations still somewhat isolated from the general public, it represents a very real danger to the unity and diversity of this country. The media have not given this movement enough attention to make this danger real enough to the public.

"Christian Identity should not be dismissed as a marginal phenomenon, unconnected to the issues of today," Zuskind finalizes in his book. "The U.S. has been undergoing an resurgence of bigotry, some of it encouraged by variant strains of Christianity. This resurgence is a deep, ugly stain in our society which challenges people of good will from all religious communities to stand up against bigotry and reaffirm their active commitment to an inclusive society. Christians have a special responsibility to speak out against the Christian Identity movement, which seeks to to speak in the name of all Christians."

A more detailed account of the Christian Identity movement can be found in Zeskind's book, *The Christian Identity Movement:* Analyzing Its Theological Rationalization for Racist and Ant-Semetic Violence." The book is available through the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 10500, Atlanta, GA 30310.

The "Christian Identity" Movement

Analyzing Its Theological Rationalization for Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence

LEONARD ZESKIND

CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

PUBLISHED BY THE DIVISION OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

FACES OF HATE: GLOBAL RACISM AND ITS LOCAL EFFECTS

COLORADO COLLEGE
GATES COMMON ROOM

A Joint Venture
Presentation and
Panel Discussion

Wednesday, November 15
Seven PM

The Colorado Springs Independent

Ground Zero

Diversity Enrichment Committee of Residential Life

Citizens Project

Citizen's Project , Ground Zero, The Independent and the Diversity Enrichment Committee of Residential Life will sponsor a presentation and panel discussion on "Faces of Hate: Global Racism and its Local Effects" at the Colorado College on Wednesday, November 15th beginning at 7:00 p.m..

The speakers and panel members are Graeme Atkinson, Leonard Zeskind and Floyd Cochran.

Graeme Atkinson, an expert on the neo-Nazi movement in Europe and the editor of Searchlight, a London-based anti-fascist magazine, will speak about the international racist movements. During the height of the neo-Nazi street violence in Germany, Atkinson's detailed reporting and research served as constant resource for foreign correspondents reporting from that country, including reporters for the New York Times, and Washington Post. His investigations into the Europe-wide connections of neo-Nazi organizations have been groundbreaking.

Leonard Zeskind, an expert on far-right racism and and anti-Semitic social movements in the United States, will address the dynamics of and connections between racist movements in the United States. Zeskind serves on the board of directors for the Jewish Community Relations Bureau in Kansas City, and for over eight years was research director of the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal, a clearinghouse for efforts to counter hate group activity. He also trained law enforcement officials and others in proper procedure for handling hate crimes. Zeskind was the first person Floyd Cochran came in contact with after breaking from the Aryan Nation hate group.

Floyd Cochran, former Aryan Nation leader, will address the internal working of racist organizations and its effect in local communities. Cochran broke from the Aryan Nation in the Springs of 1992 when he confided to a fellow member, Wayne Jones, that his four-year-old son was about to undergo an operation for a cleft palette. "He's a genetic defect,"

Jones told Cochran, "When he comes to power, he'll have to euthanized. "Cochran was in shock. For the first time in his life the hate he preached toward others had come back to him and his family.

Cochran's breaking free of the Aryan Nation has been a slow, difficult and dangerous process. He moves regularly and changes his phone number every few weeks due to constant threats on his life. Yet, he continues to speak out against hate groups like the Aryan Nation. He recently testified before the Montana state legislature on behalf of two civil rights bills for gays and lesbians.

Please join us for what will be an interesting and awareness-heightening evening.

For more information please call Citizens Project, 520-9899 or Ground Zero 635-6086

COLORADO COLLEGE
Gates Common Room
in Palmer Hall
Wednesday, Nov. 15 7PM
All Welcome
Admission: Free

GRAEME ATKINSON
Specialty: The Neo Nazi Movement
Publisher: London's *Searchlight* Magazine

LEONARD ZESKIND
SPECIALTY: Far-right racism and and anti-Semitic social movements in theU.S.
See Book Review Above

Floyd Cochran
Former Aryan Nation leader, will address the internal working of racist organizations and its effect in local communities.

The Bible, Fear & Homosexuality

by Samuel Dean Behrens

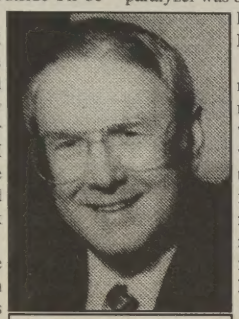
Part One

I was in the cobweb-filled attic of an ancient, dilapidated Victorian mansion. The stench of rot and dust violated my nose and lungs when, all of a sudden, the barking started. Panic filled my chest and I knew that the pack of huge, snarling Rotweilers had caught my scent and were after me. All of the windows were boarded up. I was trapped in the attic! I had to find the opening in the floorboards that had led me to this attic prison.

Somehow I found that doorway to freedom, dropped to the floor below and started running. The sound of their barking was deafening! I kept finding stairwells leading down to more stairwells. I kept saying to myself, 'If I could just get outside I'll be safe'

All along the barking and snarling came closer. I was tearing through the darkened edifice when up ahead I saw the beveled glass entry door that led to the outside! I shoved it open, ran across the creaking, wooden porch and jumped to the cement walk that led to the street.

The dogs had cleared the door and were almost upon me. I saw the high, metal bars of the gate up ahead. I thought if I could just climb the gate and drop to the other side, that the dogs wouldn't be able to jump such a high barrier and I would be safe!



Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family is playing more and more prominently in national politics and in the radical right's national agenda to exert extensive control over America!

The pain of oxygen starvation began to tear through my chest as I scrambled for freedom that waited on the other side. I knew that if I lost my grip or slipped on the bars, that I could be impaled by the spikes protruding from the top of the gate. I swung myself over and landed on the sidewalk, hoping not to fall or sprain my ankle. I started running down the sidewalk away from the house when I knew that somehow the dogs had broken through the gate and were right at my heels. Just as they were about to tear into my flesh, I started to scream and . . . I woke up.

My heart was pounding. I was alone in my bedroom. My bed covers were drenched with perspiration. I looked for the window and saw that it was still night outside. I had been dreaming!

I got up and went to the living room and sat down on the couch. I realized that I had been having this same nightmare for several weeks. I didn't want to go back to bed because I was afraid that the nightmare would start all over. I decided to to try and stay awake until morning. I had become so afraid to close my eyes, that sometimes I would stay awake until four o'clock in the morning to try and bypass R.E.M. sleep so that I could go directly into the second and third stages of sleep where I had been taught that dreaming did not take place. It wasn't working!

Fear had gripped my life. I was afraid to go to sleep!

Exhaustion was beginning to take its toll. At the time, I was a youth pastor at a large Assembly of God church with a growing youth group. I was being praised by everyone from the senior pastor all the way to the silver-haired octogenarians. Success seemed to be coming my way. So, why couldn't I go to sleep?

I have never been accused of being timid, let alone fearful. I grew up in a family of four boys that were always challenging each other to do what were some really crazy things,now that I look back on it, just so we couldn't be called 'a scaredy-cat.' In fact, I had always seemed to get a rush out of living close to the edge. I had been known to take dares like jumping off of fifty foot cliffs and railroad bridges into rain swollen rivers. I was a certified S.C.U.B.A. diver. I had confronted my professors and teachers all my academic life from elementary school all the way through college. If there was danger involved, I was going to be in attendance! So why was I so afraid of some make-believe dogs in a dream that I knew could not physically hurt me?

I was ashamed to tell anybody that I had become afraid, that Samuel had become 'a 'scaredy cat' Sure enough, all that I had heard about fear being debilitating and a paralyzer was beginning to come true in my life. I had to find an answer! I had to get some sleep!

As a child, growing up in my Pentecostal church, I had memorized the 23rd Psalm which declares, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me." I had heard many sermons on how to overcome fear. In fact, I had even spoken about overcoming fear to the youth group in my church. But how was I to overcome something that I seemed to have no control over? How could God be with me in my nightmare?

I started researching everything I could find about dreams and nightmares and fears. I read psychological treatises on the symbolism in dreams. I began to search scripture on what God had to say about fear. I studied the effects of sleep deprivation and the horrible consequences that flowed. I read about historical figures and how they overcame their fears to become leaders during their day. I learned about dream analysis. I read the stories in the Bible that related how God sometimes used dreams to communicate with people to give direction, counseling and warnings.

In all of my readings, one simple message seemed to pierce through all of the myriad theories and examples provided by the numerous authors. I had to face my fears! I had to face those snarling, grotesque Rotweilers. I didn't know what those dogs symbolized, but I knew that I had to stop running from them and turn and face them, no matter the outcome!

Finally, I had a plan. If I could just remember that during my dream, during the panic, during the chase, I would have to somehow stop running, turn around and let the beasts attack me in all of their ferocity. I began to allow myself the luxury of going to sleep early. For, several nights, the nightmare did not come. I was beginning to think that somehow just mustering the courage to go to sleep early was the trick to stop the horrors of R.E.M. sleep. I was wrong.

I found my self in the attic. The sound of the snarling and the barking began all over. The engulfing panic and chase started all over. The flight down the stairwells, the beveled glass door, the spiked gate, the leap to the sidewalk, the running, the running and then the thought, 'Samuel, stop! Remember, Samuel, stop, turn and face them!' As I heard the voice in the dream I knew I had to do just that.

In the dream I caused myself to stop, turn around and face what I knew would be a painful and agonizing death. And guess what I saw? Those snarling, ferocious animals had suddenly stopped running! They were walking towards me, their tails were wagging and they started to playfully lick at my feet! And I woke up. The fear was gone! The power of the nightmare had been broken.

The story that I have just related is true. Although that was over twenty years ago,I have never had another recurring nightmare! When I have had a scary dream, I somehow have remembered to face whatever I was fearful of, and without exception, 'that awful thing'lost its power to control me.

Right now, there are a lot of people in our communities who are being controlled by fear. They allow 'that awful thing,' whatever it is, to debilitate and paralyze them. Fear is their motivator, It causes some to panic and run, it causes other to stop dead in their tracks,afraid to make a move. It causes others to hide in their closets of fear and shame. Fear is as pervasive as the air we breathe. It is all around us. And it is being used to keep lesbian, gay and transgendered people 'in their place'

I listened to Louis Farakhan's speech at the Million Man March, and although I did not agree with everything he said, I was struck by one awful truth. History has proven over and over again that fear can be successfully used to control large populations. Fear was used to keep African American's 'in their place' for hundred's of years. Fear kept the Jews 'in their place'in the ghettos of Nazi Germany. Fear kept whole governments 'in their place'during the Middle Ages by excommunicating Popes. And it is that same type of fear that is being used by Radical Fundamentalists to keep us 'in our place,' our closets of shame. Fear has kept politicians from speaking the truth because they are afraid of the little man from the Christian Coalition. Fear keeps parents from showing their love for their gay and lesbian children because of 'what others might think of them' Fear keeps pastors from teaching the truth about Sodom and Gomorrah and Leviticus and Romans because they might be turned out of their pulpits by those who like to believe the lies of Lou Sheldon, D. James Kennedy and Paul Cameron.

Fear takes root in the dirt of lies. Scripture declares that 'the Truth shall set you free!' The converse is just as powerful. Lies will keep you bound! When people believe a lie, fear begins to germinate in their lives. And the more, the fear is watered and nurtured in a garden of lies, the bigger and stronger the fear becomes. In the Christian tradition, the first lie that mankind believed was in the Garden of Eden. The serpent said, 'You shall not surely die.' And because the first traditional family believed that lie, they became bound in their sins. And the Father of Lies continues to bind Traditional Families to this day. They believe the lie that if they have a Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered child that it is somehow their fault and they should be ashamed of themselves and their child! They are not being told that 'the homosexual die is cast in utero' in the womb! They believe the lies put out by James Dobson's organization, Focus on the Family, who funds the Family Research Council that uses the falsified studies of Paul Cameron. Paul Cameron was expelled from the American Psychological Association in 1983 for falsifying statistics and who was expelled from the American Sociological Association in 1985 for misrepresenting sociological research. And yet, Paul Cameron is still being quoted in the propaganda put out by Focus on the Family in 1995. . .ten years later! Fear is nurtured in the dirt of falsehood.

Samuel Dean Behrens is a former minister with the Assemblies of God. He left the ministry when he realized that he was gay. He is currently a director of Christian Gays and Lesbians for Justice. If you would like to join or if you have any questions concerning the Justice Team, Samuel can be reached at 1280 Bison #B9-431, Newport Beach, CA 92660, Phone: 1-714-644-8827, FAX: 1-714-644-4591.

Focus on the Holidays

Dobson never misses the chance to promote elimination of Separation of Church and State

Colorado Springs CO---If you or your teaching colleagues receive an 8 page Thanksgiving Day card complete with lesson plan and legal support for teaching about religious issues, or at Christmas, a "A Gift for Teacher" with similar content, please be aware that these items are a product of an organization called "Gateways to Better Education" and are sold at a cost of $4 each, minimum order of 2. They are promoted in the Nov. 1995 issue of *Focus on the Family*, the magazine produced by fundamentalist Dr. James C. Dobson of Colorado Springs.

The article also contains a list of steps Christians (the very conservative kind) can take to "restore holiday-friendly classrooms in your schools." Needless to say the holidays listed are all Christian holidays.

The article, by Eric & Kim Buehrer, also blasts the Anti-Bias Curriculum published by the Nat'l Assoc. for the Educ of Young Children. They misrepresent the material by first making a quote and then going on to make statements which are not in the original source but seem to be because they are paired together.

Anyone can subscribe to *Focus on the Family*...free.... which I do to be informed about what those I disagree with are saying. If you have a Christian radio station in your area listen to it, or call it to find out the address for this publication. (I do not use my own name so that if I show up on other mailing lists I know where the material originated.) It is also important to be alert to the kind of logic many families are susceptible to, often without realizing the full extent of what is being stated. Dr. Dobson has some good material, but it is often insidiously mixed with exclusivity of other, open views.

All this ties in with the *Phi Delta Kappan* (Sept/95 issue) report on a new poll which included 9 questions to do with spoken prayer in the schools. A footnote in the article:

"A CBS News/NY Times poll taken recently showed that the majority of Americans (sic - interviewed) 55% did not know that a child's right to pray privately in school is constitutionally protected. Many probably do not know, either, that the Supreme Court struck down Alabama's moment-of silence law in 1985, terming it a constitutional establishment of religion."

Article reprinted with permission from The P.E.R.S.O.N. Project*; ph/fax: 510-601-8883, 586 62nd St. Oakland, CA 94609-1245 *P.E.R.S.O.N. stands for Public Education Regarding Sexual Orientation Nationally.

COLOR BLIND

BY
FRANK WHITWORTH

"America is a racist society," is a truism stated after the Simpson verdict by Colin Powell. The Pope, speaking in Baltimore on Sunday, October 8th, said that intolerance of diversity leads to terrible consequences and events. Current events clearly endorse both of these statements.

One must be deeply troubled by the debate that has ensued since the Simpson verdict. The racial tension that has flared up as a result indicates strongly that declarations of racial harmony are merely a thin veneer hiding a deeply split and troubled nation.

I don't know whether Simpson was guilty or not. I didn't sit in the courtroom and listen to all arguments, observe all facial expression or study the nuances of various testimonies. I urge you to put aside the verdict and whether you agree with it or not for the moment. Look at the arguments that have arisen since. They all deal with racial disharmony and intolerance.

Could you not just as well say , for example, "that Fuhrman, played the race card—Cochran simply trumped it?"

Was not the statement of the District Attorney disingenuous when he said that had Simpson been tried in Santa Monica, where he should have been, he would have faced a jury of his peers. Why? Because, reasoned the DA, there would not have been so many Blacks. Would any jury of Simpson's peers not have to include a large number of Blacks, his true peers?

Can we deny the fact that the race card has played constantly against Blacks and other racial minorities in a court system where the conviction rate against them is higher for equal crimes than for Whites; where the sentences meted out are heavier for them than for Whites for equal crimes; where the death penalty is applied more often to Blacks in equal crimes; where paroles are given earlier to Whites than non-Whites in a much higher percentage of the cases?

Can we deny that White influence and White wealth have gotten many "guilty" Whites off throughout U.S. history and conversely have been used to convict Blacks?

Can we deny the fact that Whites committing crimes against Blacks are treated more leniently by the courts than are Blacks committing crimes against Whites?

My real concern is that the radical right is using this incident to fan the flames of race hate. They are raising the cry that this is symbolic of the decline of American culture. They are using this situation to fulfill their monoculturalistic society, driven by fundamentalist Balkanization of American culture. The radical right desires division in our society seeing, as its end result, their control of government and society, the establishment of some form of theocratic government and the suppression of any who disagree with them.

The problems in the Balkans do not stem from the fact that there are divergent racial and cultural elements. They stem from the fact that fundamentalists in each of these elements have spent hundred of years promoting hate and distrust among them rather than teaching understanding and respect. Is this what we want America to become? Is this not the road that we have begun to travel?

Jesus, who is called the Prince of Peace, admonished us to love our neighbors. He did not say—love our neighbors but hate who and what they are; reject and revile their differences; segregate them and oppress them.

Finally, I do not believe anyone who says they are color blind nor do I believe that color blindness is the objective. Yes, laws and justice must be color blind in their application. But color blindness indicates a rejection of color—a statement that there is some reason why we should not recognize and respect one's color and cultural differences.

When a White man says he is color blind, is he not saying he sees and judges everyone as white? Is he not indicating that he is ignoring the value and worth of a person of color? The question to ask him, then, is, if you are color blind, would you change places with a Black man? Would you exchange color with him? If you are color blind, would you change places with a Black man? Would you exchange color with him? If you are color blind, would your own color, whatever it is, be insignificant and meaningless to you?

Join The Resistance Greetings

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These cards are not for everyone. People who think the Newts and Kevins of the world are exemplary citizens and politicians will not like these cards. In fact, some think these cards should carry a warning label:

NOT FIT FOR CONSERVATIVE CONSUMPTION!
POLITICIZED FUNDAMENTALISTS BEWARE! or
READING CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO BIGOTRY!

However, for those of you who wish to send a message along with a greeting, welcome to our humorous turf.

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WE
SEE
HATE
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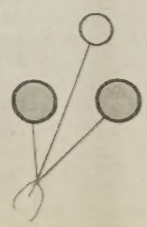
BIGOTRY
PREJUDICE
HOMOPHOBIA
ANTI-SEMITISM
AMENDMENT NO. 2
ULTRACONSERVATISM
WHITE TRASH SUPREMACY
& POLITICIZED FUNDAMENTALISM
IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO.

III

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM A FOCUSED-ON FAMILY

Let's Hope, Work, and Vote For A Better New Year

birthday irony for you:



COLORADO IS AN ENGLISH ONLY STATE. TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH, COLORADO MEANS COLORED. SO, FROM NOW ON, EVERYONE IS GOING TO HAVE TO SAY...

Colored City, Colored
Feliz Complcaños
May Your Dreams of Equality All Come True

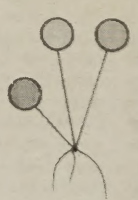
a holiday riddle for you...

WHY IS SANTA AFRAID TO COME TO COLORADO SPRINGS

answer:
Because Prancer Has a thing for Kevin and Will.

happy holidays
May All Your Dreams for Justice and Equality Come True in the New Year

a birthday thought for you...



In Colorado Springs, it is said that ANYONE can be the head of a family, just as long as...

he is a
White
Male
Christian
Heterosexual
HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
EXCLUDED
ONE

May Your Dreams Of Equality All Come True

a birthday riddle for you:

What is black, and white and white and white

LANDERS V. HELMS

Advice columnist Ann Landers refused to back down when one of her readers wrote to complain about her opinion of Jesse Helms' opinions. The reader who wrote was Jesse Helms himself.

In a previous column, Landers questioned the Senator's views on AIDS. Helms has frequently condemned funding for research and care related to this "homosexual disease."

In her October 15 column, Landers printed a letter from Helms, who wrote to clarify his record. "I have indeed called for a fairer and more equitable balance in federal funding for AIDS and a number of other diseases including heart disease and cancer," Helms claimed, "As for AIDS being transmitted through blood transfusions and by unsterilized needles, you are, of course, correct. But as has been made clear by many medical authorities long ago, the ultimate origin of all such AIDS-tainted blood has been homosexual contact."

Landers replied: "Dear Sen. Helms -- Your statement 'the ultimate origin of all such AIDS-tainted blood has been homosexual contact' is patently incorrect. The Centers for Disease Control does not know where the virus originated, but it infects both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike." Landers also refuted Helms' claim she mistakenly asserted that he wanted to reduce AIDS funding. Landers reminded the Senator of his own despicable record: "You have sponsored four amendments to the 1995 Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources and Emergency (CARE) Act that would severely cut funding for AIDS."

Landers reminds Helms that he has indeed voted for legislation that would restrict "funds from being used for organizations that provide lifesaving services, counseling . . . and accurate medical information for gays and intravenous drug users." After detailing each of the amendments, Landers pointedly asked the Senator: "Are you aware that AIDS is the leading killer of Americans ages 25 to 44?"

It is especially gratifying that a columnist with Landers' clout has refused to capitulate to the stupidity and hate of Jesse Helms. Landers is the most widely-syndicated columnist IN THE WORLD. Her daily advice appears in over 1,200 newspapers and reaches 90 MILLION readers.

Landers' first column was printed on October 16, 1955. In that premiere piece, she offered some advice to an adulterous husband. That advice could easily be given, today, to Senator Jesse Helms. "Time wounds all heels," she wrote. "You'll get yours."

ACTION ALERT! Ann Landers has specifically noted that letters from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender readers -- and our allies -- have helped open her own, previously-homophobic eyes. Keep the mail coming! Write to Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11562, Chicago, IL 60611-0562.

HOMOPHOBE, HEAL THYSELF

With regard to intelligent conversation, a recent episode of the "Geraldo Rivera" show was about as empty as Al Capone's vault. "Gay Today, Straight Tomorrow" was the theme for Rivera's October 18 broadcast, which opened with the host asking: "Can homosexuality be cured?"

To his credit, Rivera's guests included two couples -- one gay, the other lesbian -- who refuted the absurd and deeply homophobic notion of "cures." These couples were joined by Robert Spitzer, a medical doctor who played a historic role (in 1973) in homosexuality's removal from classification as a"psychiatric disorder."

However, the bulk of the talk show's chatter was taken up by Charles Socarides -- the quack "doctor" and author of "A Freedom Too Far," who has made a career of spreading homophobic misinformation. Joining Socarides 'side of this "debate" were various self-hating lesbians and gays who claimed to have been "cured." Most told lurid and exaggerated stories of their promiscuous lifestyles before being saved from the dread disease of homosexuality.

Expectedly, Socarides dredged up some very stale "science." He explained that homosexuality festers in men who are attempting to compensate for a lack of childhood masculinity; in women, homosexuality is the result of bad relationships with men. When asked why some homosexuals seemed to be happy despite their "disease," Socarides told the audience that this was due to"easy access to partners," a "lack of responsibility in raising children,"and "keeping all of one's income to one's self."

In an act of utter negligence, the despicable "doctor" also made a point of directly addressing children in the viewing audience, urging them to be healthy by CHOOSING heterosexuality. Such impossible advice is tantamount to telling young lesbians and gays to slash their own wrists. It also gives "professional" permission to the youthful homophobes who commit most of this country's hate crimes, subtly advising them to stop the spread of homosexuality by bashing another queer.

Significantly, Geraldo Rivera did not challenge Socarides' claims, but remained conspicuously neutral throughout the show. Such neutrality is hardly Rivera's trademark. The passionate host has actually punched -- and been punched by -- guests who were as racist as Socarides is homophobic.

Rivera's DEFERENCE TO HOMOPHOBIA is a classic media bias. Homophobes are routinely given the "benefit of the doubt." Homophobic comments are either ignored or treated as "fair comment" by "good liberals" who -- like Rivera --seldom display a similar tolerance for racist or anti-Semitic propaganda.

Talk shows are a media format where even the pretense of objectivity is unnecessary. In such a forum, Rivera's neutrality becomes even more reprehensible. Perhaps he might heed the advice of Elie Wiesel, who -- as he accepted the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize -- reminded the world to "Take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim."

The oppressive myth of homosexual "cures" is as old as the myth of homosexual "recruitment." The irony, of course, is that few talk shows have yet to deal extensively with the dreadful HETEROSEXUAL RECRUITMENT that gays and lesbians must endure every day. Moreover, too few talks shows have given significant attention to CURES FOR HOMOPHOBIA, though homophobes ARE being cured --slowly, but daily.

Consider, for example, a story in "The Miami Herald," printed just a few days before the "Geraldo" broadcast. In "A Minister's Revelation" (October 13), "Herald" staff writer Julie Kay details the story of John House -- "a lifelong minister of the Southern Baptist faith." Kay writes: "One day while driving into town with his 17-year-old son, John House heard three words that would irrevocably alter his life: 'Dad, I'm gay' . . . . 'I thought I would die,' House recalls. In a sense, part of him did. For as House reexamined his life, he gradually shed the Southern Baptist stance against homosexuality."

"Today, nearly 20 years later," says Kay, "House, 69, is the pastor of . . .a new church for gays and lesbians."

ACTION ALERT! Insist that Geraldo Rivera deal seriously with serious issues, treating homophobia with no more deference than racism or sexism; also, encourage more print and broadcast media to expose the myth of "cured "homosexuals," while telling the many untold stories of cures for homophobia. Write to Geraldo Rivera, "The Geraldo Rivera Show," 524 West 57th Street,New York, NY 10019, tel. 212-265-8521, e-mail geraldo cbs@aol.com; Julie Kay,"The Miami Herald," 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, FL 33132, fax 305-376-8950, e-mailHeraldEd@aol.com.

TV GUIDES

The Fall television season opened with the promise of unprecedented queer visibility. Some of that promise has been kept -- some has NOT.

According to a report in "Variety," the original concept for the new prime-time soap opera "Central Park West" included a homosexual character. However, CBS executives ordered producer Darren Star to change the role to a straight woman.

The lesbian, African-American judge on CBS's "Courthouse" has been all but invisible lately. The character and her partner have not been featured prominently in recent episodes, and the show is reportedly undergoing "some revamping."

On a positive note, the new NBC sitcom "The Pursuit of Happiness" continues to provide ample character space for "Alex," a gay series regular (played by stand-up comic Brad Garrett). One recent episode gave a twist to a sitcom storyline staple. Alex secured a "set-up" date to impress his ex-lover, a construction worker, who was attending a party with his new boyfriend.

ACTION ALERT! The vitality of queer TV characters depends on your feedback! Share your displeasure (with Lawrence Tisch, President, CBS, 51West 52nd Street, New York, NY 10019), concerns (with Deborah Joy LeVine,Producer, "Courthouse," Columbia Pictures Television, Sony Pictures Plaza,10000 West Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, tel. 310-280-8597, fax310-280-4398) and compliments (with David Lee and Peter Casey, Producers,"The Pursuit of Happiness," Paramount Domestic TV, 5555 Melrose Avenue,Trailer 33, Hollywood, CA 90038, tel. 213-956-4830, fax 213-956-1393; copy your correspondence to Warren Littlefield, President, NBC Entertainment, 3000West Alameda Avenue, Burbank, CA 91523, tel. 818-840-4444).

TWO POINTS

Press coverage of "Romer v. Evans" -- the Amendment 2 case -- was extensive. The result was a media mix of the good, the bad and the ugly.

Good, if lackluster, coverage was provided by C-SPAN's "America & The Courts"series. The program's October 14 broadcast provided a fair and accurate overview of the civil rights contest, now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. The program properly identified Amendment 2 as legislation that "bars or repeals any state or local laws that would protect homosexuals from discrimination." C-SPAN also provided viewers with the actual text of the amendment, something many news outlets have -- remarkably -- failed to do.

Guests for this edition of "America & The Courts" included Jean Dubofsky,lead attorney in the case against Amendment 2, Tim Tymkovich, Colorado's Solicitor General, and Joan Biskupic, a Supreme Court reporter for "The Washington Post." Dubofsky pointed out that Amendment 2 would "deprive gay people of all access to civil rights protections in Colorado," while Tymkovich argued that Amendment 2 is really a matter of a "state's right" to refuse "special protections" to homosexuals.

Bad coverage of the Amendment 2 case was plentiful, however. For example, in what the "Rocky Mountain News" touted as "A Different Perspective on the amendment 2 Conflict," associate editor Clifford D. May wrote: "On one side are homosexual activists tossing around such purposely provocative and predictably hyperbolic slogans as 'Amendment 2 Kills Queers'. On the other side are religious activists who 'object' to what other people do in bed and think their objections should matter to anyone but themselves." May goes onto champion the self-loathing rhetoric of "Log Cabin Republicans" and "conservative homosexuals" who -- though they may oppose Amendment 2 -- still"don't demand that government endorse their lifestyle or grant them special protections based on the fact that they happen to find David Hasselhoff prettier than Pamela Anderson."

May's editorials hardly reflects the "moderate" position he seems to admire. Notice that he is incapable of referring to "religious activists" as the "homophobic activists" they undoubtedly are. Moreover, Amendment 2 is hardly a privacy issue and has nothing to do with what "people do in bed." Defending the privacy of what "people do in bed" is not at all a defense of the civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender citizens. It is, simply, the veiled rhetoric of homophobes like May who "don't mind" what homosexuals do, as long as they don't "flaunt it."

Even uglier coverage of Amendment 2 can be found in the October 23 issue of "U.S. News & World Report." John Leo -- the magazine's "On Society"columnist -- defended Amendment 2. Leo argued: "For the Supreme Court to strike down a state constitutional amendment as unconstitutional would come close to overriding ordinary democracy." Not surprisingly, Leo -- a white,heterosexual male with a long history of homophobic writing -- is against what he calls "victims groups" and their demand for "customized protections."

Send the appropriate feedback to John Leo, columnist, and Mortimer B. Zuckermen, Editor-in-Chief, "U.S. News & World Report," 2400N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037-1196, fax 202-955-2685, e-mail71154.1006@compuserve.com (letters intended for publication should be sent to the "Letters Editor," and must include the sender's full name, address and daytime telephone number); Clifford D. May, Associate Editor, "Rocky Mountain News," 400 W. Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80204, fax 303-892-2568,e-mail letters@denver-rmn.com; Regina Hunter, Senior Producer, "America &The Courts," C-SPAN, 100 North Capitol Street, N.W. 650, Washington, DC 20001, tel. 202-737-3220, fax 202-737-3323; Tim Tymkovich, Solicitor General, Office of the Attorney general, 1525 Sherman Street, 5th Floor,Denver, CO 80302.

DUMBER STICKERS

The "Albuquerque Journal" (September 24) reports that a number of highly offensive bumper stickers were prominently for sale at a recent convention of the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW). Among the tacky stickers were those with these slogans: "Roosevelt -- A Chicken in Every Pot; Clinton -- A Fag in Every Pup Tent," "The Miracle of AIDS Turned Fruits Into Vegetables," "Work -- It's the White Thing To Do, "and "Renuke Japan." As one observer noted: "If this is the attitude of Republican women, one can only guess at that of Republican men." Demand that the NFRW repudiate the message of these stickers and apologize for allowing them to be sold! Contact the National Federation of republican Women, 124 N.Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3011, tel. 703-548-9688.

SOUND BITE "I never discuss my sexuality with the press because many actors who have played openly gay characters have gone to great lengths to announce their heterosexuality. I find this behavior to be somewhat homophobic" -- Doug Savant, who plays gay character "Matt" on "Melrose Place," quoted in "Entertainment Weekly," October 13, 1995.

(UN)SOUND BITE "Oh God, help us care for our children. Give us wisdom to create regulations that will protect the innocent . . . In times past, You have used the Senate to deal with problems of air and water pollution, and the misuse of our natural resources . . . . Now, guide the Senators as they consider ways of controlling the pollution of computer communications" -- Prayer offered by U.S. Senate Chaplain Lloyd John Ogilvie, on the Senate floor, June 12, 1995.

Continued from P. 1

Mel White's Soul Force

At the very least, in the next 52weeks, we will discover how much political muscle they have actually acquired, how serious they are about eliminating us, and how close we are to winning or losing the human and civil rights granted us by our Creator and guaranteed us by the U.S. Constitution.

Although the smallest skirmish in the most isolated American town is important, these are the current battles that concern me most and the questions that I ask to help me decide how well (or badly) we are doing.

1. Will the U.S. Supreme Court roundly reject Colorado's Amendment 2? On October 10, 1995, the U.S. Supreme Court conducted hearings to decide if Colorado can exclude lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men from all existing laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation; and if that state can forbid all state and local government officials from taking action to remedy discrimination against us. How will we warn our fellow Americans of the dire consequences of a Supreme Court decision that supports Colorado's right to discriminate against us? And how will we help turn the nation's conscience against local and statewide, anti-gay measures like Amendment 2?

2. Will the Hawaii State Supreme Court make gay and lesbian marriages legal? Their 1993 landmark decision (Baehr v. Lewin) favoring gay marriage has created a furious backlash in Hawaii and across the country. And though the court's final decision has been postponed until June, 1996, there are good reasons to believe that the Hawaiian justices will not be bullied into changing their minds.

How will we help convince lesbigays that this is decision is not about marriage but about equal rights? And how will we help create a positive, supportive climate for lesbigay marriage before the negative backlash takes hold?

3. Will an employment non-discrimination act be passed by the 104th Congress and signed into law by President Clinton? A 1994 Newsweek poll indicated that 74 percent of all Americans favor protecting gays from job discrimination.

How will we help stop the radical right from mobilizing enough political pressure to defeat even this simple step towards fairness? And how will we respond when someone in our town is fired unfairly?

4. Will Retired Episcopal Bishop Walter Righter be tried and found guilty of "heresy" for ordaining Barry Stopfel, an openly gay man, as a church deacon in 1990? Although presiding Bishop Edmund Browning tried to persuade his colleagues to dismiss the charges, 76 other Episcopal bishops voted to conduct the second such heresy trial in their 206-year history. How will we support local and national church leaders who are risking their careers to support us? And how will we help convince other religious leaders to do what they know is right?

5. Will President Clinton confront the rhetoric of the extremist Christians and take a stand for gay rights in his re-election campaign? To say the least, Mr. Clinton has vacillated on this issue. But there is hope. On August 4, the President signed an executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in issuing security clearances. In October, he endorsed ENDA, coming out for legislation banning discrimination of gays and lesbians in employment. Now, will he support equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans in this crucial race?

How will we register voters, recruit and support gay-positive candidates, campaign precinct by precinct, and mobilize our allies in this next crucial election?

6. Will the Congress re-authorize the Ryan White Care Act to provide care and treatment for AIDS patients for another five years without crippling the bill with Sen. Jesse Helm's (R-NC) amendment: to prohibit any use of the money to affirm homosexuality "as natural, normal, or healthy" or to describe in any way "techniques of homosexual sex?" Under Helm's plan, heterosexual men could be instructed on how to use a condom as an anti-AIDS measure; while homosexual men, the most severely affected by the epidemic, could not.

How will we mobilize enough calls and letters to defeat Helm's amendment? How will we work to increase funding for AIDS research and AIDS services in this hostile climate? And how will we continue to support our brothers and sisters with AIDS and other serious illnesses when so many volunteers are exhausted and without adequate resources?

7. Will the House of Representatives eventually grant Lou Sheldon, the founder of the radical right's Traditional Values Coalition, the Congressional hearing promised him by Newt Gingrich: "to demonstrate how gay groups are trying to sneak their pro-tolerance teaching materials into the public schools under the "Trojan horse of Aids education?" How will we apply pressure on Congressman Hoekstra's Committee to refuse Sheldon this opportunity to misinform the Congress as he is misinforming the nation? And how will we mobilize our own forces to bring truth about lesbigayT issues to our local, state, and national officials?

8. Will school boards across America follow the lead of the Merrimack, New Hampshire board approving policies that ban any positive presentations of homosexuality in the classroom? Did Ralph Reed really say, "I'd rather have 15,000 school board members than one American president."

How will we get involved in school board elections and discussions on behalf of our gay and lesbian youth? And what kinds of local and national lesbigayT youth services will we support with our time and money?

9. Will President Clinton's 'don't ask, don't tell' military policy be found unconstitutional in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals? The case against Lt. Paul Thomasson, is the first to reach a federal appeals court. Will the courts finally bring justice to our sisters and brothers serving (or wishing to serve) in the military?

How can we support those men and women (and their legal councils) in this long, expensive process? And how can we build support in the White House (and across the nation) to end the shameful military ban?

10. Will the Idaho Citizens Alliance collect 41,335 signatures in time to put their next anti-gay initiative on the November, 1996, ballot? Once again, we are facing statewide initiatives that would seriously discriminate against lesbigay Americans. How will we mobilize in states like Idaho to help end these campaigns of harassment and misinformation? And how will we organize on a state-by-state, grassroots level to defeat these initiatives when they make the ballot?

When we wake up on that fateful morning in November, 1996, and read the results of the national election, will it be too late? The Christian Coalition and its allies are working relentlessly to end our civil rights, school board- by-school board, city council-by-city council, precinct-by-precinct, state-by-state across the nation.

For many of our sisters and brothers the consequences of this avalanche of anti-gay rhetoric and anti-gay political action have been fatal. In this hostile climate we are rapidly becoming the number one victims of hate crimes across America. Since Gary and I moved to Texas, for example, we have buried more than a dozen innocent gay men, tortured and murdered by gay bashers who think they are doing God a favor.

How will you respond to the discrimination, the suffering, and the death? First, you have to decide how serious it is. Gary and I monitor the war against us on a daily basis. Carefully reading our indicators, like the questions raised above, have us convinced that the war is very serious indeed. What would it take to convince you that freedom is at stake? What would motivate you to volunteer your time and money in this just cause?

Second, once you've decided to get involved, there are many wonderful organizations who need your help: your own Ground Zero, P-FLAG, Christian Gays and Lesbians for Justice, the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Victory Fund, Lambda Legal Defense, GLAAD, Act-Up, Queer Nation, Lesbian Avengers, People for the American Way, the ACLU, the UFMCC, and other denominational and interfaith groups, your local lesbigay justice organizations, AIDS service groups and community centers. Endless opportunities await but don't be overwhelmed. Just pick one task. Specialize. Let others take care of the rest. But do something before it is too late. Because in that process of doing justice, win or lose, your own spirit will take wings. Ninoy Aquino said it this way: "Better a meaningful death than a meaningless life."

Third, once you decide to be an activist, then you must decide what kind of activist you will be. My own brief life as a 'gay-activist' began almost accidentally less than three years ago with the 60 Minutes' interview, the appearances on Larry King Live, and the release of *Stranger at the Gate*. Suddenly and without adequate preparation, Gary and I found ourselves in the front lines of the war being waged against us.

In the first 12 months, I marched, demonstrated, organized, prayed and fasted in a kind of activist frenzy. Then one day in November, 1994, Lynn Cothren, Coretta Scott King's assistant, put his arm around me and pointed me gently towards the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lynn knew something no one else had told me. Before I could resist oppression effectively, I had to learn the rules.

In the past 12 months, my own life has been revolutionized by the life and teachings of King, Gandhi, Audrey Lorde, Romero, Aquino, Bonhoeffer, Mandela, Hammarskjold, Suzanne Pharr, and, of course the Jewish prophets, especially, Jesus. These great activist spirits who have risen up to shape my life, also make it clear: there are time-proven principles for resisting oppression effectively and we ignore them to our peril.

According to Dr. King, Jesus gave us the motive for resistance (love) and Gandhi gave us the method (truth). Inspired by his own activist heroes and sheroes, King combined the motive and the method to resist oppression effectively in America. He called it Soul Force and though I'm just beginning to discover the power of those Soul Force principles in my own meager attempts to resist oppression, they have given my life a whole new, exciting direction.Whatever organization you join, whatever kind of activist you become, let the principles of Soul Force guide your journey.

I've spent the last year learning about those amazing, life-transforming principles. During the next critical thirteen months, I'm going to send a Soul Force newsletter each month to friends across the country. Each letter will include a news update from the frontlines, analyzing our successes and our failures. Each letter will also share the principles of Soul Force from the teachings of Gandhi and King that are trustworthy guidelines for resisting oppression effectively. (If you want to be on my Soul Force mailing list, just send me a note with your name and address to Mel White, PO Box 609, Ennis, TX. 75120.) I will also be doing a regular news update in *Ground Zero News* and the *Justice Journal*.

As we work together for justice, not just for lesbigayTs, but for all victims of bigotry and violence, remember these words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever does..." Now, we have to decide whether it will be their small group or ours.

Editor's Note: Remember that If you request to be on Mel's mailing list, it cost s him money--precious money that he spends willingly but that is running out. Send him a few bucks to help out. And thanks to our special friend Samuel Behrens and the Christian Gays and Lesbians for Justice for allowing us to reprint Mel's article, first appearing in their Journal, *Justice Report* (Fall, 1995).

DR. MEL WHITE ON COLIN COOK

(In his seminars Colin Cook referes to Mel White as being a friend--a friend suffering from all the "problems" of homosexuality. Here, Mel responds to Cook and his problems, historically and currently.

(Dallas, Texas) Colin Cook's method for 'curing' homosexuality ranks alongside leaches and lobotomies in the tragic history of medical malpractice. I congratulate Rick Cendo, Virginia Culver, and the Denver Post for having the courage to expose this leader of the well-intentioned but totally fraudulent "ex-gay" movement. I'm sorry that Colin Cook must suffer this terrible public embarrassment, but I am relieved that the truth about Colin's personal life has been revealed at last.

Like myself, tens of thousands of gay men and lesbians in the U.S. have been victims of the worthless "reparative" or "ex-gay" therapies espoused by Cook and by Cook's sponsors, Kevin Tebedo's Colorado for Family Values, James Dobson's Focus on the Family and Pat Robertson's 700 Club. I wasted a quarter-of-a-century of my life and more than $150,000 of my resources struggling to "overcome" my homosexual orientation through Cook's unproven and misleading 'ex-gay' methods. I know from terrible experience that after years of trying, Cook's victims end up far worse than where they began. We minister to thousands.

In my autobiography, *Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay And Christian In America*, I describe my painful journey. As late as yesterday, October 26, at the seminar Cook is teaching at the Colorado Springs Sheraton, Cook discussed my "case" publicly with conferees, dismissing my struggle with simplistic contempt, condemning my acceptance of my homosexual orientation, and denouncing my ministry with God's gay children.

For years we have monitored this false and inflammatory anti-gay rhetoric of James Dobson, Kevin Tebedo, Coach McCartney and other sincere but misinformed Christian leaders. Much of that anti-gay rhetoric flows directly from the false belief espoused by Colin Cook that homosexuality can and should be cured.

In today's Denver Post, once again we are reminded through Colin Cook's own personal tragedy, that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a gift from God that cannot and should not be changed. I invite Colin to accept his homosexuality as another of God's gifts. Instead of bearing false witness and holding out false hope, it is time for Colin to accept the gift that God has given him and live his new life with integrity. He is always welcome to attend any one of our 300 congregations of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches where God's gay and lesbian children find acceptance and spiritual wholeness at last.

Ground Zero Responds to *Post* Article on Cook

by Frank Whitworth

Colorado Springs CO---The unfortunate revelations concerning sexual abuse of those who came to him for help as reported in the *Denver Post* on October 27th only point out the flaw in the so called "reparative therapy" movement espoused by Colin Cook.

Cook, a homosexual-in-denial, has been promoted as being a "cured" homosexual and introduced around the state as offering a way out for homosexuals--a "cure" if you wish--by Colorado for Family Values (CFV). Endorsed by CFV, Cook set up an organization in Denver called "Faithquest" and, with the help of CFV, gathered unto him men and children who have sexual and self-identity difficulties, offering himself as a prime example of a successful "cure."

Gays and lesbians warned Colorado for Family Values and the general public early on of Cook's history, pointing out that he set up a similar program with Seventh Day Adventists called "Quest," that was ultimately abandoned by the Adventists when they discovered that Cook was abusing those who placed themselves in his charge, including minor children. Gays and lesbians pointed out the extremely high failure rate of reparative therapy and the probability that Cook would repeat his past actions.

"The problem with 'reparative therapy' is it offers a cure where there is no illness," said Julie Cooper, a spokesperson for Ground Zero. "In truth it is brainwashing designed to repress a person's true identity and sexuality. Such repression of self often leads to obsession and perversion no matter what a person's sexuality. If you are unable to resolve your sexual identity and accept yourself, you remain troubled. This view, in general, is supported by positions of the American Psychological, American Sociological and American Medical Associations. Cook is a prime example of this syndrome."

While there may be a few--very few--individuals who are acting out homosexuality because of some aberration in their mental condition and who are actually heterosexual, true homosexuals-those of us who know and accept who we are--identify that we have always been homosexual and that we are as comfortable and "normal" in our sexuality as heterosexuals are in theirs. "When help is needed," Cooper continued, "it is most often as an aid to accepting who we are. It is not found in programs advocating repression and denial of our true nature and identity."

On October 26th-28th, Cook presented his seminar at the Colorado Springs Sheraton. Among the participants were minor children, parents and ministers. Among the scandalous and irresponsible statements by Cook made on the first day was that Homosexuals who cannot accept that what they do is wrong may as well commit suicide. Studies during the Bush administration demonstrated that one-third of all teen suicides are by gay youth. Such statements by a person who puts himself in a place of trust and power are totally reckless and should be denounced by a caring community, by Colorado for Family Values and by organizations like Focus on the Family.

Addressing the article in the Post at the morning session of the seminar, Cook denounced that article, calling it lies and misrepresentations. He then launched spluttering and angrily into an attack on gays and lesbians that totally ignored fact and studies, stating that gays and lesbians are the principle practitioners of bestiality and pedophilia, that the media and national networks are dictated by committees of gays who tell them what they may present, etc.

Mid-morning, tv cameras and press people showed up from Focus on the Family and the "700" Club only further propelling Cook into his rantings. Despite the fact that the allegations in the Post came from a number of sources, including the Seventh Day Adventist, all with the radical right seem intent on defending the actions of Cook, denying the weight of evidence and the pattern of his past.. The seminar will continue until late afternoon on the 27th.

"Colorado for Family Values needs to act quickly to repair the harm and damage Cook has done to children and young adults it recommended to and sent to him. The trauma of placing oneself entirely in an adult's care and having that adult fail and misuse them can have longterm devastating effect on these youth not to mention the damage done to their sexual identity by this false therapy," concluded Cooper. End

Twice ordered arrested by Kevin Tebedo for passing out material on Cook's background, Rick Cendo of GLAIL made demands of CFV in this letter

October 27, 1995

Dear Kevin:

Given the information that the gay and lesbian community has helped bring to light and that is published in today's issue of the Denver Post, I hope you will finally agree to my 4-month-old demand to you, contained in my May 2, 1995 letter to you, that "you promise in writing, to cease your activities with Cook, to publicly issue a statement of apology for promoting Cook, and to contact each family that attended your already-completed sessions."

Photo by Dave Buresh/*Denver Post*

This picture of a strident Colin Cook appeared in *Denver Post article* about Cook's alleged latest sexual misconduct. Cook denounced *Post* article as lies.

While in your May 12 letter back to me, you call my concern about Colin Cook's behavior "false righteous indignation," accuse me of "schizophrenia" and proclaim that "Colin is not a homosexual or a child molester, nor is he a 'recovering' homosexual or child molester," I hope that you will now truly examine how wrong you have been about homosexuality.

Colin Cook is living proof that people need to accept their sexuality and develop healthy, loving long-term relationships that accommodate and domesticate that sexuality. Your agenda of insisting that homosexuality is a "choice", and of hoping to defame and persecute anyone who engages in it, simply denies reality and creates unnecessary tragedies.

Given that you had me arrested for trying to warn people about Cook, there is great temptation in my heart, Kevin, to chide you for your wicked and deceptive ways. Among the many ironies in this tragedy is that you regularly and cynically smear gay men and lesbians as child molesters for your personal political gain -- even while you cavalierly promote as a sexual counselor to youth a man that you have damn well known all along to have a history of child molestation. And you smear us as child molesters for your personal political gain even while you attack and arrest gays for trying to make you stop endangering the lives of children.

The most important thing right now, however, is to contain and minimize the terrible damage that you and Colorado For Family Values have already done to Colorado's children by promoting Colin Cook across the state this summer in scores of CFV "Time to Stand" seminars.

This is what you need to do immediately:

1. Personally contact each family that you have a record of attending your "Time to Stand" seminars and explain to them that you were tragically wrong in promoting Colin Cook and that they should no longer view Cook as a trustworthy counselor to sexually troubled youth.
2. Run advertisements warning about Colin Cook and acknowledging your mistake in every newspaper in which you ran
advertisements this summer describing Cook as someone "who once lived the homosexual lifestyle and now helps others escape it through his ministry, FaithQuest."
3. Send a letter explaining your actions and mistake to everyone on CFV's mailing list. The letter should also ask your members to contact anyone that they know to have attended a CFV "Time To Stand" seminar and to alert these contacts that CFV was wrong to promote Cook the way that it did.
4. Donate $37,500 in CFV funds to child-abuse prevention programs in Colorado. This is the amount that Colorado's gay and lesbian community raised last year for child-abuse prevention programs in Colorado. Given your extremely irresponsible behavior, Kevin, I think the least CFV can do is help protect children as much as we do -- the people you routinely smear as child molesters.

As I said in the May 2 letter to you that you so contemptuously dismissed, "If you continue your promotion of Cook, and Cook continues his well established pattern of behavior in molesting innocent children, then you are just as guilty of child molestation as your so-called minister is when he grabs children's penises, makes them strip, or rubs his penis against them."

Kevin, it's time to take responsibility for your actions and to act swiftly to make whatever amends are possible. I'd would like a letter from you today, Kevin, personally promising to meet these four demands from the gay and lesbian community immediately.

Sincerely, Richard Cendo, President
Gays and Lesbians Against Immoral Lifestyles

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